

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of converting a computer user interface panel between different panel types, the method comprising:
activating an automated process that reads field attributes in a first configuration table that can be used to display a first panel in a computer system, the first panel comprising a plurality of fields and belonging to a first type of panels in which a configuration table associated with a panel of the first type is tied to logic that specifies how the panel of the first type interacts with a backend of the computer system; and
creating entries in a second configuration table that can be used to display a second panel in the computer system, the second panel comprising at least some of the plurality of fields and belonging to a second type of panels in which a panel of the second type is formed of configuration table entries and is independent of the backend;
wherein the automated process converts the field attributes to be compatible with the second type of panels and stores them in the second configuration table for use in displaying the second panel.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising associating the field attributes with fields of the second panel.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the field attributes that are read in the first configuration table are those field attributes of the first panel that are relevant for converting the first panel to the second panel.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of fields comprises first and second template fields to be displayed next to each other on a common row in the first panel, wherein converting attributes associated with the first and second template fields comprises determining whether the second template field is an input field.
5. The method of claim 4, wherein the second template field is not an input field, further comprising converting the attributes associated with the first and second

template fields so that the first and second template fields will be displayed on a common row of the second panel.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the panels of the second type comprise columns in which the fields are arranged, and wherein the plurality of fields comprises first and second fields to be displayed next to each other on a common row in the first panel, wherein converting attributes associated with the first and second fields comprises determining whether the first and second fields are input fields.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein both the first and second fields are input fields, further comprising converting the attributes associated with the first and second fields so that the first and second fields will be displayed on a common row and in a common column of the second panel.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the panels of the second type comprise columns in which the fields are arranged and wherein each of the plurality of fields has a length specified as a number of characters, wherein converting the field attributes comprises assigning a specific width of at least one column to each of the fields based on its specified length.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the first panel comprises a plurality of binary controls that can be individually selected by a user, and wherein panels of the first type having such binary controls comprise a Boolean variable for each of the binary controls, wherein attributes associated with the binary controls are converted so that one of the fields of the second panel represents the binary controls.

10. The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving and executing a user input for editing the second panel.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the input is received and executed in a drag-and-drop environment.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein the input changes a location of one of the fields of the second panel.

13. The method of claim 10, wherein the input changes an attribute of one of the fields of the second panel.

14. A computer system for converting a user interface panel between different panel types, the system comprising:

a first configuration table that can be used to display a first panel comprising a plurality of fields and belonging to a first type of panels in which a configuration table associated with a panel of the first type is tied to logic that specifies how the panel of the first type interacts with a backend of the computer system, a plurality of field attributes being associated with the plurality of fields;

a second configuration table that can be used to display a second panel comprising at least some of the plurality of fields and belonging to a second type of panels in which a panel of the second type is formed of configuration table entries and is independent of the backend; and

a conversion module that converts at least some of the field attributes to be compatible with the second type of panels and stores them in the second configuration table for use in displaying the second panel.

15. The computer system of claim 14, wherein the conversion module is capable of receiving and executing a command for editing the second panel.

16. The computer system of claim 14, wherein the conversion module provides a drag-and-drop environment for receiving and executing the command.

17. The computer system of claim 14, further comprising a drag-and-drop environment displayable on a screen by which a user can edit the second panel.

18. A computer program product containing executable instructions that when executed cause a processor to perform operations comprising:

activate an automated process that reads field attributes in a first configuration table that can be used to display a first panel in a computer system, the first panel comprising a plurality of fields and belonging to a first type of panels in which a configuration table associated with a panel of the first type is tied to logic that specifies how the panel of the first type interacts with a backend of the computer system; and

create entries in a second configuration table that can be used to display a second panel in the computer system, the second panel comprising at least some of the plurality of fields and belonging to a second type of panels in which a panel of the second type is formed of configuration table entries and is independent of the backend;

wherein the automated process converts the field attributes to be compatible with the second type of panels and stores them in the second configuration table for use in displaying the second panel.

19. The computer program product of claim 18, further comprising instructions that when executed cause the processor to perform operations comprising:

receive and execute a command for editing the second panel.

20. The computer program product of claim 19, further comprising instructions that when executed cause the processor to perform operations comprising:

present a drag-and-drop environment where a user can edit the second panel.